



Address by

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At

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Reconfiguring Interfaith and Intra-faith  
Understanding**

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*All praise be to Allah, peace and blessings upon Prophet Mohamed,  
his family and his companions*

***Excellencies,***

***Ladies and gentlemen,***

*Assalamu alaikum warahmatu Allah wabarakatuh,*

I am pleased to send you this address. First of all, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to His Excellency Professor Rashid Shaz, ISESCO Ambassador for Dialogue among Civilizations, for convening this international conference on **(Reconfiguring Interfaith and Intra-faith Understanding)** to which I wish every success.

I would have liked to attend this event and enjoy the company of this elite group of intellectuals and scholars, had it not been for some prior commitments.

***Excellencies,***

***Ladies and gentlemen,***

The theme of interfaith dialogue takes on growing importance in the context of the international efforts towards promoting a culture of peace and fostering tolerance and coexistence among nations and peoples. These efforts ultimately seek to set up the bases of global peace through settling conflicts, resolving crises and defusing heightened tensions in the sphere of international relations.

Intercultural dialogue leading to the alliance of civilizations is the solid base of interfaith dialogue. It indeed is the efficient methodology for achieving rapprochement among the faithful believers of heavenly religions, providing proper perspectives of each other and eliminating the causes of skepticism. It is also instrumental in eradicating tendencies to aversion and easing tensions which may, when heightened, lead to currents of hatred, racism and discrimination resulting from the non-respect for the right to difference. Being one of the manifestations of the cultural diversity that ISESCO describes as creative, this right to difference is one of Allah's laws in His creation as in the Quranic verse, ***“But you will never find in the way of Allah any change, and you will never find in the way of Allah any alteration.”***

Dialogue at the religious, cultural and civilizational levels grows in importance as challenges facing humanity increase in magnitude and complexity, particularly in this juncture characterized by severe tensions and armed conflicts that, in fact, originate from religious, ethnic and political clashes. Actually, these serious crises are not adequately resolved to eliminate its underlying causes.

Today, the world is in dire need of strengthened dialogue at various levels, particularly among followers of religions, and more particularly among spiritual leaders and the intellectual and scholarly elite. For the risks threatening international peace and security are consistently growing to such an extent that they severely undermine the stability of human societies. In this regard, the means of salvation from the looming horrors reside in deepening mutual understanding in order to foster coexistence, promote tolerance, and boost dialogue among followers of religions, in general, and among the followers of the same religion, in particular. This would ultimately foster rapprochement

among the faithful on earth, irrespective of their religious beliefs, bring the schools of thought within the same religion closer together, and strengthen the bonds of religious brotherhood.

*Excellencies,*

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

All religions converge on advocating the values of goodness, justice, morals and equality between human beings who are honored by Allah. Almighty Allah says in His Holy Book “*We have honored the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favors, above a great part of our creation.*” Human dignity is intrinsically preserved and whoever violates it does wrong to themselves before doing it to others. Dialogue is therefore the only way to preserve human dignity and raise it above all else, since peace on Earth presupposes peace in the minds, which takes root and thrives through dialogue among followers of religions and among cultures and civilizations, for the good of all humanity.

*Excellencies,*

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

One of the lofty goals pursued by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) is to promote dialogue among cultures and civilizations and among followers of religions, by organizing conferences and symposia, disseminating scientific studies and specialized publications and participating in international conferences. To this end, the Organization seeks to expand partnership and cooperation with regional and international

organizations and institutions sharing its objectives, and with the Vatican, with the aim to spread a culture of dialogue and to promote tolerance, harmony and coexistence among nations and peoples. Such is the noble civilizational mission undertaken by ISESCO as part of its role as the cultural mouthpiece of the Islamic world, and through which it serves humanity at large.

Our responsibility in this connection is a moral and religious obligation that we cannot and should not give up. So let us work together to heal the rift and close ranks within the framework of faith-based brotherhood and human solidarity.

I thank you for your attention, wishing every success to your conference.

*Wassalamu alaikum warahmatu Allah wabarakatuh.*